THE STORY-TELLER.

LITTLE WHITE SOULS.

By Florence Marryat.

AUTHOR OF "FIGHTING THE AIR," "LOVE'S CONFLICT," ETC., ETC.

(*Continued.*)

And thus it came to pass that Mrs. Dunstan's absurd jealousy of Mrs. Lawless drives her to spend that fatal month at the lonely castle on the Mandalinati Hills instead of going in peace and safety to her native land. For a brief space Hope leads her to believe that she may induce Mrs. Lawless to pass the time of exile with her. If her woman's wit can only induce the fatal beauty to become her guest, she will bear the loss of Charlie's society with equanimity. But though Cissy Lawless seems for a moment almost to yield, she suddenly draws back to Mrs. Dunstan's intense annoyance.

The old castle on the Hills, she exclaimed. 'Are you and Colonel Dunstan going there? How delightfully romantic. I believe no end of murders have been committed there, and every room is haunted, O! I should like to go, too, of all things in the world. I long to see a real ghost, only you must promise never to leave us alone, Colonel, for I should die of fright if I were left by myself.'

'But I shall not be there, I am very sorry to say,' replies the Colonel. 'My wife and Katie are going for change of air, but I must simmer meanwhile at Mudlianah.'

Pretty Cissy Lawless looks decidedly dumbfoundered and begins to back out of her consent immediately. 'I pity you,' she answers,' and I pity myself too, for I expect we shall have to simmer together. I should like it of all things, as I said before, but Jack would not let me leave him. He is such a dear,useless body without me. Besides, as you know, colonel, I have business to keep me in Mudlianah.'

Business again! Ethel turns away in disgust, but it is with difficulty she can keep tears from rushing to her eyes. However, there is no help for it, and she must go. Her child is very dear to her, and at all risks she requires mountain air. She must leave her colonel to take his chance in the plains below—only as he puts her and the child into the transit that is to convey them to the hills, and bids her farewell with a very honest falter in his voice, he feels her hot tears upon his cheek.

'O! Charlie, Charlie! be true to me. Think how I have loved you. I am so very miserable.'

'Miserable, my love, and for this short parting. Come Ethel you must be braver than this? It will not be long before we meet again, remember.'

'And till then, you will be careful, won't you Charlie, for my sake, and think of me, and don,t go too much from home, and remember how treacherous woman are, and I am not beautiful I know, my darling, I never was, you know,' with a deep sob, 'like Mrs. Lawless and others, but I love you, Charlie, I love you with all my heart, and I have always been faithful to you in thought as well as deed.' And so, sobbing and incoherent, Ethel Dunstan drives away to Mandalinati Hills, whilst the good colonel stands where she left him, with a puzzled look upon his honest sunburnt face.

'What does she mean ?' he ponders, 'by saying she is not beautiful like Cissy Lawless, and telling me to remember how treacherous women are, as if I did'nt know the jades. Is it impossible Ethel can be jealous, jealous of that poor pretty little creature who is breaking her heart about her Jack. No! that would be too ridiculous, and too alarming into the bargain, for even if I can get the boy out of the scrape it is hardly a matter to trust to a woman's discretion. Well!, well, I must do the best I can and leave the rest to chance! Ethel to be jealous! the woman I have devoted my life to. It would be too absurd, if anything the creatures do can possibly be called so.' And then he walks off to breakfast with the Lawlesses, though his heart is rather heavy and his spirits are rather dull for several days after his wife starts for the castle on the hill. Ethel on the other hand gets on still worse than her husband. As she lies in her transit, swaying about from side to side over the rough country roads, she is haunted by the vision of Charlie walking about in the garden till the small hours of the morning, hand in hand with Cissy Lawless, with a mind entirely oblivious of his poor wife and child, or indeed of anything except his beautiful companion. Twenty times would she have decided that she could bear the strain no longer, and given the order to return to Mudlinah, had it not been for the warning conveyed in the fretful wailing of her sickly child—his child—the blossom of their mutual love. So for Katie's sake poor Ethel keeps steadfastly to her purpose, and soon real troubles take the place of imaginary ones, and nearly efface their remembrance. She is well protected by a retinue of native servants, and the country through which she travels is a perfectly safe one; yet as they reach the foot of the hills up which they must climb to reach the celebrated castle, she is surprised that her nurse (or Dye), who has been with her since Katie's birth, refuses to proceed any further, and sends in her resignation.

'What do you mean, Dye?' demands her mistress with a natural vexation, 'you are going to leave Katie and me just as we require your services most! You, who have always professed to be so fond of us both! Are you ill?'

'No,missus, I am not ill, but I can't go up the hill. That castle very bad place, very cold and big, and bad people live there and many noises come, and I want to go back to Mudlianah to my husband and little children.

'What nonsense, Dye! I didn't think you were so foolish. Who has been putting such nonsense into your head? The castle is a beautiful place, and you will not feel at all cold with the warm clothes I have given you, and we have come here to make Miss Katie well, you know, and you will surely never leave her until she is quite strong again.'

But the native woman obstinately declares that she will not go on to the Mandalinati Hills, and it is only upon a promise of receiving double pay that she is at last complainingly consents to accompany her mistress to the castle. Ethel has to suffer, however, for descending to bribery, as before the ascent commences every servant in her employ has bargained for higher wages, and unless she wishes to remain in the plains she is compelled to comply with their demands. But she determines to write and tell Charlie of their extortion, by the first opportunity, and hopes that the intelligence may bring him up, brimming with indignation, to set her household in order. Her first view of the castle, however, repays her for the trouble she has had in getting there. She thinks she has seldom seen a building that strikes her with such a sense of importance. It is formed of a species of white stone that glistens like marble in the sunshine, and it is situated on the brow of a jutting hill that renders it visible for many miles round. The approach to it is composed of three terraces of stone, each one surrounded by mountain shrubs and flowers, and Ethel wonders why the Rajah Mati Singh, having built himself such a beautiful residence, should ever leave it for the use of strangers. She understands very little of the native language, but from a few words dropped here and there she gathers that the castle was originally intended for a harem, and supposes that the rajah's wives found the climate too cold for susceptible natures. If they disliked the temperature as much as her native servants appear to do, it is no wonder that they deserted the castle, for their groans and moans and shakings of the head quite infect their mistress, and make her feel more lonely and nervous than she would otherwise have done, although she finds the house is so large that she can only occupy a portion of it. The dining hall, which is some forty feet square, is approached by eight doors below, two on each side whilst the gallery runs round the top of it, supported by a stone balustrade, and containing eight more doors to correspond with those on the ground floor. These upper doors open into the sleeping chambers, which all look out again upon open air verandahs commanding an extensive view of the hills and plains below. Mrs. Dunstan feels very dismal and isolated as she sits down to her first meal in this splendid dining hall, but after a few days she gets reconciled to the loneliness and sits with Katie on the terraces and amongst the flowers all day long, praying that the fresh breeze and mountain air may restore the roses to her darling's cheeks. One thing, however, she cannot make up her mind to, and that is to sleep upstairs. All the chambers are furnished, for the Rajah Mati Singh is a great alloy of the British throne, and keeps up this castle on purpose to ingratiate himself with the English by lending it for their use; but Ethel has her bed brought down stairs, and occupies two rooms that look out upon the moonlit terraces. She cannot imagine why the natives are so averse to this proceeding on her part. They gesticulate and chatter—all in double Dutch, as far as she is concerned—but she will have her own way, for she feels less lonely when her apartments are all together. Her Dye goes down on her knees to entreat her mistress to sleep upstairs instead of down; but Ethel is growing tired of all this demonstration about what she knows nothing, and sharply bids her do what she is told. Yet, as the days go on, there is something unsatisfactory—she cannot tell what—about the whole affair. The servants are gloomy and discontented, and huddle together in groups, whispering to one another. The Dye is always crying and hugging the child, while she drops mysterious hints about their never seeing Mudlianah again, which makes Ethel's heart almost stop beating, as she thinks of native insurrections and rebellions, and wonders if the servants mean to murder her and Katie in revenge for having been forced to accompany them to Mandalinati.

(*To be Continued.*)

ANNEXATION.

The Hon. F. Whitaker, late Premier of the Colony of New Zealand, recently addressed a meeting of citizens in the Theatre Royal, Auckland, on the subject of "Federation and Annexation." In his opinion there is no question whatever, that the future of Australia—the future of the Pacific Islands—is one of especial interest to New Zealand, more perhaps, as regards the Pacific Islands, than to any of the other colonies; and at the same time Auckland itself is in this respect more particularly interested than any other part of New Zealand. He considered that the proceedings of the Convention were of the most friendly character amongst all the delegates. He has never met a number of men more completely bent on the work they had in hand than on that occasion. He also said that if on any future occasion it should be his lot to be called upon to meet any convention, he only hoped to meet similar men, or the same men, as he met on that occasion—men performing their duties with the same regard to the public interest as those he met in Sydney lately.

In the course of his address the Hon. speaker made a special allusion to the "Protest" issued by the Hawaiian Government against annexation. On this important point we reproduce Mr. Whitaker's remarks in full: "Now, a curious incident occurred with regard to the Sandwich Islands, or what has been called the Hawaiian monarchy. A gentleman of the name of Audley Coote, who is Consul in Tasmania for the Hawaiian monarchy, was instructed by his government to present a protest against the proceedings of any government or colony in attempting to deal with the islands of the South Pacific. I will not read the whole of the protest—that would not be worth while—but I will read the commencement of it:—'Whereas His Hawaiian Majesty's Government being informed that certain sovereign and colonial States propose to annex various islands and archipelagoes of Polynesia, does hereby solemnly protest against such projects of annexation, as unjust to a simple and ignorant people, and subversive, in their case, of those conditions for favorable national development, which have been so happily accorded to the Hawaiian nation." Now this is a most extraordinary document. Mr. Coote came personally to Sydney for the purpose of pressing the views put forward in the protest, and to be ready in case any information should be required. Mr. Whitaker said "in regard to the statement made that the people of these Polynesian Islands are 'simple and ignorant,' their simplicity appears to consist in murdering and eating people, or committing any other atrocity that happens to take their fancy." With regard to their 'national development,' it is certainly a curious fact that, whereas sixty years ago, the population of the Sandwich Islands was estimated at 250,000, ten years ago it had decreased to 40,000, and is, at the present time, probably not more than 25,000, so that the 'development' appears to be tending towards extinction. But the fact of the matter is this, although the government of the Sandwich Islands is carried on nominally by a native King and Parliament—His Majesty dates his protest from Iolani Palace, Honolulu—the real government is carried on in the inlerest of sugar speculators in the United States.' "what is called a reciprocity treaty exists between the Sandwich Islands and America, by which sugar from Hawaii is admitted free of duty into the United States, and certain articles are admitted free on the other side. It happens with regard to these islands, as I have shown, that the population is gradually decreasing, and no doubt in the course of another generation or two it will be all but extinct. Its decrease has been going on very rapidly, a curious commentary on the statement made in the protest that the Hawaiians desire to see in the other islands of Polynesia 'those conditions for favorable national development which have been so happily accorded to the Hawaiian nation!' The protest, it is quite clear, could have no possible weight. But it may be mentioned that although the protest takes the high ground of 'national development,' Mr. Audley Coote did not forget a little business of his own when in Sydney, by attempting to bring before the Conference a scheme for duplicating the cable to Europe, thereby combining his great political functions with his private interests. While protesting against anything being done to retard the national development of the Polynesians, he was at the same time endeavoring to advance his own interest by securing the support of the Convention for his scheme for the duplication of the cable."

Mr. Whitaker pointed out that the convention met principally in regard to the annexation of New Guinea and the other islands of the South Pacific, and as regards federation and the question of French convicts. These were the three most important subjects which specially claimed the attention of the convention and which they met to discuss, and deal with. The first resolution which was passed by the Convention was to this effect, "That further acquisition of dominion in the Pacific, south of the Equator, by any foreign Power, would be highly detrimental to the safety and well-belag of the British possessions in Australasia, and injurious to the interests of the Empire." What the Convention desired was that the islands of the South Pacific should fall into the hands of England, and hereafter be federated with New Zoaland and the rest of the Australasian colonies. The representatives of New Zealand were under the impression that the resolution was not sufficiently specific, and therefore proposed as an amendment, "That this Convention respecfully suggests that its object may be effectually attained in respect of islands not connected by treaty or otherwise with foreign Powers, by cession, annexation, or a protectorate, as may be most suitable in each case." The Convention was of opinion that these islands might be most effectually brought under the control of England by one of these modes, and they are desirous that one of these modes should be adopted. That amendment, however, was not carried, simply because it was thought that it would look like dictating to the Imperial Government. They also proposed, "That this Convention has no desire to impose undue burthens either upon Great Britain or Australasia by any attempt to colonise or settle any of these islands, and therefore proposes to limit occupation to such an extent only as will be sufficent to prevent interference by foreign Powers, and will enable Her Majesty's Imperial Government to establish a jurisdiction by Orders-in-Council,similar to that now in operation under the Western Pacific orders, but applicable alike to the subjects of foreign nations as the British subjects."

With regard to other islands in the Pacific Mr. Whitaker says that "there are other islands in the Pacific of which we cannot take possession—the Navigators, for instance—Samoa and Tonga (that is, the Friendly Islands), for this reason; they have been acknowledged by Her Majesty's Government, by the German Government, and, to a certain extent, by the American Government. But there is no mode by which without a breach of international law, we can obtain possession of these is lands, except by cession. Whether they might be ceded to Great Britain is a question to be determined in the future."

In conclusion of this long address Mr. Whitaker said: "Now is the time and it is the duty of every man in New Zealand—the duty of every man in these Australasian colonies to take the subjects we have discussed to-night into his serious consideration and to deal with them without delay, and to consider carefully what I have said to-night, which is only half of what could be said in favor of that which is proposed to be done, and at once to make up his mind to act. I hope that, throwing aside all party considerations, all selfish feelings of every description, New Zealand will step forward and place herself in the position she ought to occupy as one of these countries which shall be bound up in a grand federation for the present, and a grand empire in the future."

There is a great demand for one and two dollar notes, and Secretary Folger thinks congress should make a move to supply it. If congress thinks it can supply everybody who is demanding these notes with enough to satisfy them, it has bitten off a very large sized job.